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Minorities at Middlebury

Alexander Lucius Twilight

In August 1823 Middlebury College presented Alexander Lucius Twilight with a baccalaureate degree. He was the first black American to graduate from an American college or university.

Twilight entered Middlebury as a junior in 1821 at the age of 26. A native Vermonter, Twilight grew up in Corinth, Vermont where he was an indentured servant to a neighborhood farmer. At the age of 20 he purchased his remaining year of servitude and undertook educating himself.

In just six years, from 1815-1821, he was able to complete the entire secondary school course curriculum and the freshman and sophomore years of college study while supporting himself as a farmer.

After graduation in 1823, Twilight taught school in Peru, NY where he met his wife, Mercy Ladd Merrill. He returned to Vermont to teach at Orleans County Grammar School at Brownington. He remained there for the rest of his life, teaching and directing the school. His career as an educator touched the lives of some 3,000 youngsters. Twilight also served on the state's General Assembly. He was one of the first black members of any state legislature in the United States.

America's first black college graduate died in June 1857.

Photo courtesy of Orleans Historical Society

KNOWING THE OPTIONS

Making decisions about college can be a very difficult and seemingly endless task. There are so many possibilities and so many considerations to weigh that students may find themselves confused and unsure. Too often the result of that confusion is to choose something "safe" and close to home. College is much more than four years of books and papers; it is a time to grow, to learn about yourself and a chance to explore the world beyond your present experiences. Therefore, it is essential to be aware of the other options that exist before you make your important decision. We feel that Middlebury College is an important option to consider.

Middlebury College is a small, liberal arts, coeducational college in Middlebury, Vermont. Academically, Middlebury offers students a challenging and rigorous four years. Our flexible liberal arts curriculum can be designed to suit your goals. Many students and parents question the value of a liberal arts education in this age of specialization. However, liberal arts teaches students much more than a specific subject or trade. Through our diverse academic curriculum students acquire not only knowledge but the ability to think clearly, to solve problems and to act with creative independence. All of these factors give our students increased upward mobility and flexibility in today's competitive job market. In fact, Middlebury graduates have pursued a variety of fields from banking and medicine to Olympic bobsledding.

The town of Middlebury is a rural and predominantly white community. For the student accustomed to life in the city or life in a predominantly Black or Hispanic community, Middlebury's location and ethnic makeup might be of special concern. Admittedly, for some it does present a real challenge. However, Middlebury does have a versatile minority community. We are a cohesive and supportive group of students and faculty members united by our similarities though not inhibited by them. Middlebury is, above all else, a place for the individual. In addition, Middlebury's small size and location offer students a unique social environment. Because Middlebury is small and relatively isolated, the primary center of social activity for Middlebury students is on campus. Middlebury students value their free time and spend it in a number of ways. Middlebury supports 11 men's and 11 women's intercollegiate sports, an extensive intramural athletic program, a dance company, a choir, an orchestra, and about 60 clubs. When not in class or participating in organized activities, many students just spend time visiting with friends. As a result, many close and lasting friendships develop at Middlebury. We are proud of the strong sense of community we enjoy here.

Middlebury College has made a strong commitment to minority students. We make special efforts to seek out qualified minority candidates. We also offer a summer pre-enrollment program for students interested in academic enrichment prior to entering college. We encourage you to consider Middlebury as you enter this difficult but exciting time. Middlebury may not be like any of the other schools you are considering, but it may be just the right place for you.

THE BLACK STUDENT UNION

The Black Student Union of Middlebury College was founded in the early seventies to represent the interests of and unite the minority students on campus. The B.S.U. is a powerful cultural and political group and is supported by student government funds. Our programs consist of films, cultural and social events, and guest speakers selected to enhance solidarity and self-affirmation among minority students. B.S.U. also presents a single voice for minority concerns and cultural education within the Middlebury College community. Its strength lies in the willingness of its members to contribute to the achievement of a sound and diverse organization.

Although the organization is entitled the Black Student Union, it represents both the Black and Hispanic students on campus. It is comprised of the following committees: Cultural Center, Counseling, Library, Social, Cultural and African Awareness Committees. These committees and the Union as a whole have a Cultural Center on campus in the John Coltrane Lounge.

From the Center, BSU works in conjunction with many other college-sponsored groups, programs, and services to offer cultural and social events that will enhance the welfare of the entire college community and establish lines of communication between minority students and the rest of the college. Thus, we represent self-affirmation of ourselves as minority students and a front of solidarity and progress to the Middlebury Campus.

The Black Student Union

THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CLUB

The International Students Club of Middlebury College came into existence as a result of the international students' desire to expose the college community to foreign cultures. Drawing from the diverse student body, which includes students from Latin America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, the organization has hosted speakers and presented films and slide shows which have helped students develop an appreciative understanding of different cultures.

One of the ways in which the International Club provides members an opportunity to present their cultures is the biannual dinners featuring international cuisine and entertainment.

Although the International Students Club is comprised mainly of foreign students, it has American participants. The community at Middlebury has benefited greatly from the increased exposure and awareness provided by the International Students Club.

Pascal Borno '83

FRESHMAN SUMMER AT MIDDLEBURY

The Middlebury summer offers a variety of challenging academic programs. Of particular interest to incoming freshmen is the August Pre-enrollment Program. Students who have been accepted are invited to participate in this stimulating preview of the Middlebury experience.

Each summer, the program's focus is a different theme of contemporary, social and political relevance; the theme is explored through seminars in several disciplines. Refresher courses in effective writing, math, and study skills create an intense three-week learning experience. Participants in the Pre-enrollment Program may look forward to outings in Vermont's beautiful mountain and lake areas and a weekend visit to nearby Montreal.

For minority students this program is an opportunity to brush up on and improve knowledge of fundamental skills. It is also a time to make friends and to start enjoying the varied and exciting life at Middlebury.

"My academic preparation, had I chosen a career within my major, would have served as excellent preparation. However, as I have chosen a field totally unrelated to my major, I find I am using all of the knowledge I acquired through four years of a diverse liberal arts curriculum and my own personal experiences."

Esther Vasquez '80

"College was an entirely new way of life after high school, consisting of adjustments and decision making. One of the biggest adjustments for me and for most people was getting used to the heavy workload and need for organization. Once these feats were mastered, everything else was simple. It is important to integrate yourself into the college community and to take advantage of the extra-curricular activities that Middlebury has to offer such as dance, theatre, winter carnival, and sports."

Norma Robinson '81

ADMISSION TO MIDDLEBURY

The most frequently asked question by high school juniors and seniors involved in making college decisions is "What are the requirements for admission?" Admission requirements do vary greatly from college to college.

Middlebury requests that students take the SAT's and three Achievement Tests, English, and two others of your choice. While the standardized tests do play a role in the decision-making process, we place more emphasis on grades, extracurricular activities, sports, jobs, creative talents, and overall motivation.

Because motivation is often a very difficult quality to measure through a written application, an on-campus interview or an interview with a Middlebury alumnus in your area is essential. In an interview we get a chance to know you better and you are able to get to know Middlebury in a more personal way than can be done via a course catalogue. All students should attempt to visit the campus sometime prior to making final decisions. Arrangements to visit the campus for an individual interview, or group information session and tour can be made by writing or calling the Admissions Office at 802-388-3711 ext. 2153.

In addition, each year in January the College sponsors a weekend especially for minority students interested in Middlebury. The Admissions Office, along with the Black Student Union, hosts students and plans numerous events and activities. Meals and housing are provided for visiting students at no cost to them. Students are responsible for transportation expenses.

Whether you come in the middle of summer, during the spectacular fall foliage season or over the January weekend, do come visit us at Middlebury. We think you will like what you see, hear, and feel.

FINANCIAL AID

As the cost of education soars, financial aid becomes a more and more significant factor in the choice of college. Financial Aid Grants, Loans, and Work Study Programs have made even the most expensive colleges affordable to all.

Middlebury College awards aid on the basis of individual student need. Your full need will be met through a combination of a college grant, loan, and job. Middlebury College sponsors a special loan program for middle income parents who may not otherwise be eligible for low interest state and federal programs. Jobs are readily available on campus and there are a few opportunities for work within the surrounding community.

Students wishing to apply for financial aid must file a College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Form which can be obtained from most high school guidance offices.

Students who have questions concerning any aspect of our Financial Aid Program should write to the Director of Financial Aid, Emma Willard House, Middlebury College, Middlebury, VT 05753, or call 802-388-3711 ext. 2158.

PROFILES

PAUL TURNER '78

Major: Biology Pre-med
Profession: General Systems Marketing Representative - IBM

STAN GLASS '79

Major: Economics
Profession: Unit Supervisor, data processing division for Allstate Insurance Co.

JANET JONES '79

Major: Music/Dance
Profession: Student with Alvin Ailey Dance Co.

ESTHER VASQUEZ '80

Major: Spanish - secondary schools teacher certification
Profession: Associate Statistician (rating services Blue Cross/ Blue Shield of New Jersey)

TYRONE WILSON '81

Major: Theatre
Profession: Graduate student Yale Drama School

Middlebury is located in central Vermont, approximately 4 hours from both Hartford and Boston, 5 hours from New York City and 6½ hours from Philadelphia.

Middlebury can be reached by bus or train. There is a Greyhound depot in Middlebury and an Amtrak station in nearby Port Henry, New York. Air service is also accessible through Burlington airport.

To reach Middlebury by car from:

NYC/NJ – Take the New York Thruway (87 North) to the Northway. Take exit 20 (Lake George) to Route 149 East. Follow Rt. 149 to Route 4 North then take Route 30 North to Middlebury.

BOSTON – Take Route 93 North to Route 89 North. Take exit 3 (Bethel) to Route 107 West. Follow Rt. 107 to Route 100 North to Route 125 West to Route 7 North into Middlebury.

MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

MIDDLEBURY, VERMONT
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